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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 001479

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/03/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDRM](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: OTHER RUSSIA'S MOSCOW MARCH PLANS SIDELINED;
KASYANOV NOT FLUSTERED BY PRO-KREMLIN YOUTH GROUP
HARASSMENT; MIRONOV'S STUMPING FOR PUTIN DISMISSED

REF: ST. PETERSBURG 50

Classified By: D/POL M/C Colin Cleary. Reason: 1.4 (d).

Summary

11. (C) Former Prime Minister and "Other Russia (OR)" participant Mikhail Kasyanov's Press Secretary, Yelena Dikun, described April 3 the Moscow city government's decision to sideline a planned April 14 "March of Dissenters" as the by-product of the authorities' uneasiness in the wake of problems with its March 3 predecessor in St. Petersburg. Dikun described Kasyanov as determined to continue his campaign for the presidency, in spite of resistance in the regions and harassment by pro-Kremlin youth groups. She joined other Embassy contacts in dismissing continued efforts by Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov to create a groundswell for a third Putin term as "pathetic," as did Public Chamber member Sergey Ryakhovskiy, who had discussed the issue briefly with Presidential Administration Deputy Vladislav Surkov April 2. End Summary.

OR: No Final Decision on March

12. (C) Yelena Dikun, the press secretary for OR participant and former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov April 3 traced the apparent April 2 decision by Moscow city authorities not to approve the next in a series of "March of the Dissenters," to fears it could get out of control, as had the March 3 rally in St. Petersburg (reftel). Dikun found the pretext for refusing OR's march notification --that the pro-Kremlin youth group "Young Guard" got there first-- "absurd." The alternate two meeting sites offered by the city would likely not be accepted by OR organizers, although Dikun noted that a decision would have to await formal rejection by the city of its notification of intention to march. To date, there had only been a telephone call. Also factored into the decision would be a Moscow municipal court's decision, expected April 4, on OR's appeal of the city's refusal to allow it to march in December. A court decision backing OR could force the city to backpedal on the April 14 notification.

13. (C) Public Chamber member Bishop Sergey Ryakhovskiy told us April 3 that Presidential Administration Deputy Vladislav Surkov, whom he saw April 2 on the margins of a meeting with Protestant representatives, dismissed OR as marginal, but noted that others did not share his view. Ryakhovskiy thought some in the GOR remained worried about a Russian Orange Revolution, concerns perhaps magnified by recent developments in Kiev.

14. (C) Dikun was unimpressed with United Civic Front and OR

participant Garry Kasparov, whom she termed a "loner," who lacks political instincts. His reliance on the Western media discredited him in Russia, she feared, and she reported that his tendency to talk about Russia as if it were a foreign country was noticed here. She contrasted Kasparov unfavorably with National Bolshevik Party leader Eduard Limonov, whom she found charismatic. She expected, however that the National Bolsheviks might soon be banned as extremist, effectively eliminating Limonov's bully pulpit.

Kasyanov Determined

15. (C) Dikun had accompanied Kasyanov on his most recent "campaign" trip April 2 to Dubna, not far from Moscow. She described attempts by a few members of the pro-Kremlin youth group "Nashi" to disrupt Kasyanov's planned meeting there as "not serious," and she noted with satisfaction that the host Institute of Nuclear Research had kept its promise to provide a forum for the meeting. Dikun noted that earlier attempts by Kasyanov to have similar meetings in Perm and Kursk had been complicated by last-minute decisions by his hosts to withdraw their offers of a venue. She attributed their decisions not to "telephone law," but to a general nervousness in the regions. Harassment of Kasyanov by pro-Kremlin youth groups was generally not threatening, Dikun said, but it was wearing. The one exception was Kasyanov's meetings in Kursk, which were disrupted by a "large group of very drunk" young people. Kasyanov had been more successful with the "virtual" meetings he had staged with audiences in Orenburg, Ufa, Yekaterinburg, Tambov, and Chelyabinsk, she said.

16. (C) Dikun expected Kasyanov to continue his quixotic run

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for the presidency. She worried that a recent re-possession of his dacha and a summons to appear in court in connection with the investigation of former Deputy Finance Minister Vavilov could be a warning of legal action to come, but she believed Kasyanov would not be deterred. (Kasyanov was First Deputy Finance Minister at the time that Vavilov was reportedly engaged in abuse of his position and, allegedly, the theft of large amounts of GOR funds.)

Mironov A "Well-Trained Parrot"

17. (C) Both Ryakhovskiy and Dikun dismissed as "pathetic" Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov's continued attempts to promote a third term for President Putin. (Mironov April 2 continued his quest to promote discussion of term three in the regions with a posting on the Federation Council website and, reportedly, letters to each of the regions' legislatures.) "It's a game," said Ryakhovskiy, who went on to describe Mironov as a "well-trained parrot." When he had mentioned Mironov's antics to Surkov on April 2, the Presidential Administration Deputy had dismissed the subject with a "wave of the hand." Dikun remained certain that Putin would step down, although she thought he would attempt to remain influential. Like other observers here, she was uncertain what form that would take.

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